

Indiana District 3 Behavioral Health Response Team

A large-scale mass casualty or infectious disease, outbreak, either man-made or naturally occurring could result in destruction of homes, businesses, or community infrastructure, loss of personal property, disruption of food, pharmaceutical, or utility services distribution, or serious health risks and other situations that adversely affect the local population. Significant psychological trauma resulting from these hazards can have profound long-term effects on the well-being of the community and would necessitate rapid triage and assessment of a potentially overwhelming number of individuals affected emotionally.

Historically, medical and emergency personnel (fire, police, and EMTs) have responded to these casualties without the benefit of training or experience in providing disaster behavioral healthcare for the affected population and mitigating the psychological impacts of a disaster on individuals or in the community.

To effectively manage behavioral health responses to disasters, Indiana has established behavioral health response teams throughout the state using the Indiana Department of Homeland Security districts. These teams of mental health professionals help victims to cope with the psychological aftermath of a disaster, mitigate additional stress and psychological harm, and provide short-term crisis interventions for affected populations. District 3 Behavioral Health Response Team members are located in Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Miami, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley counties.

The District 3 Behavioral Health Response Team is a project of the IPFW Behavioral Health and Family Studies Institute.



Because of the size of District 3 and to assure local response, the District 3 BHRT has been divided into three sub-teams:

Allen CountyDistrict 3A Team

DeKalb, LaGrange,
Noble, and Steuben Counties District 3B Team

Adams, Huntington, Miami, Wabash,
Wells, and Whitley Counties District 3C Team

For district-wide contact or training questions, contact:

District Team Leader

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District 3A Coordinator:

Allen County
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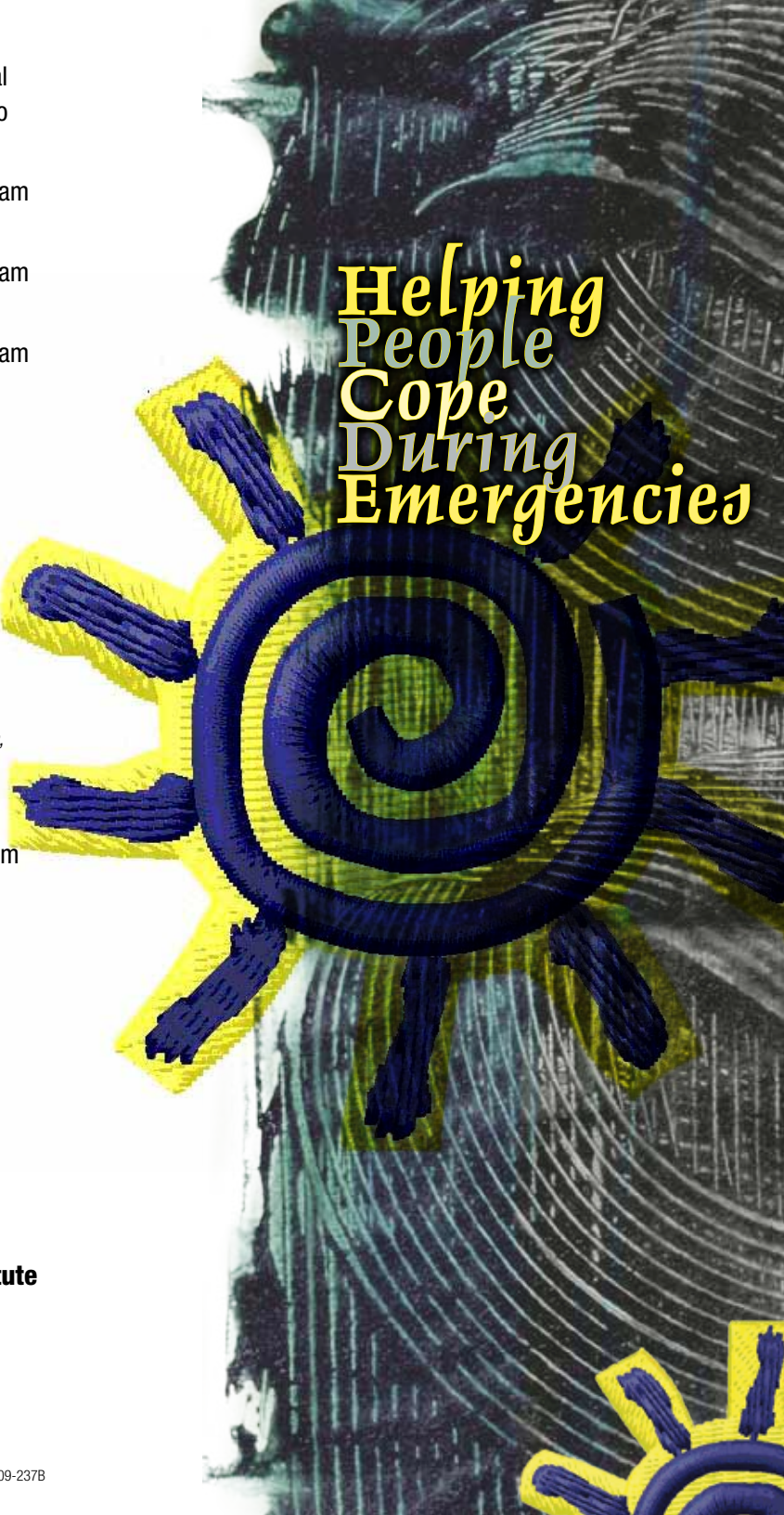
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Helping People Cope During Emergencies



Behavioral Health Response Team Objectives

- Assess the behavioral health needs of the community.
- Educate the community about disaster preparedness from a behavioral health perspective.
- Identify and coordinate volunteers and other resources.
- Assist the community in coping with the psychological aftermath of a disaster.
- Mitigate additional stress and psychological harm.
- Provide short-term crisis interventions for affected populations.
- Identify and refer those persons who are in need of more intensive crisis counseling.
- Arrange adequate long-term follow-up for all people in need of such services.
- Promote understanding and coping strategies that individuals may call upon in the future.

Responder Roles and Training

Behavioral Health Commander/Team Leader

Coordinates and facilitates the team's behavioral health response to crisis events.

Behavioral Health Co-Commanders

Assist the team leader to coordinate and facilitate the team's response to crisis events, serve as public information officers and, upon the request of or in the absence of the team leader/commander, assume the duties of the behavioral health team leader/commander.

Licensed/Certified Behavioral Health Professionals

- Provide basic support and comfort to the population affected.
- Provide specialized care consistent with their profession.
- Provide supervision of other behavioral health responders.

Requirements

For all behavioral health crisis personnel participating under the guidance of the BHRT team, training requirements will include:

- Satisfactory completion of the NIMS IS100, 200, and 700
- Satisfactory completion of the Indiana Division of Mental Health's curriculum for disaster behavioral health workers OR a curriculum approved and/or presented by the BHRT:
 - Psychological First Aid
 - Disaster Mental Health and Crisis Response

Natural Responders

- Serve as an empathetic listener.
- Provide education and outreach to community members about normal reactions to disaster.
- Refer individuals to a professional for assessment, if needed.

Many of these responders already occupy natural helping roles within a community. They may be educators, human service professionals, or community volunteers. Many will self-identify as wanting to be ready to respond or help if a disaster occurs.

Faith Leaders

This group includes clergy or laity with positions of responsibility within their faith organization to provide spiritual care for many individuals in an affected population. Faith leaders serve to unite the faith-based resources in the community and function to facilitate communication with these organizational resources during a time of crisis.

